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Carmen Nuptiale.

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The Lay of the Laureate.

Carmen Nuptiale,

BY

ROBERT SOUTHEY, Esq.

POET LAUREATE,

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL SPANISH ACADEMY, AND OF THE ROYAL SPANISH ACADEMY OF HISTORY.

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1816.

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TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE

PRINCESS CHARLOTTE

THE FOLLOWING POEM

IS DEDICATED

WITH PROFOUND RESPECT

BY HER ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

MOST DUTIFUL

AND

MOST DEVOTED SERVANT

ROBERT SOUTHEY

POET LAUREATE

The Lay of the Laureate.

PROEM.

The Lay of the Laureate.

PROEM.

I.

THERE was a time when all my youthful thought
Was of the Muse; and of the Poet's fame,
How fair it flourisheth and fadeth not, ..
Alone enduring, when the Monarch's name
Is but an empty sound, the Conqueror's bust
Moulders and is forgotten in the dust. .

II.

How best to build the imperishable lay
Was then my daily care, my dream by night;
And early in adventurous essay
My spirit imped her wings for stronger flight;
Fair regions Fancy opened to my view, . .
" There lies thy path, she said; do thou that path pur

III.

" For what hast thou to do with wealth or power,
Thou whom rich Nature at thy happy birth
Blest in her bounty with the largest dower
That Heaven indulges to a child of Earth, . .
Then when the sacred Sisters for their own
Baptized thee in the springs of Helicon!

IV.

" They promised for thee that thou shouldst eschew
All low desires, all empty vanities;
That thou shouldst, still to Truth and Freedom true,
The applause or censure of the herd despise;
And in obedience to their impulse given,
Walk in the light of Nature and of Heaven.

V.

" Along the World's high-way let others croud,
Jostling and moiling on through dust and heat;
Far from the vain, the vicious, and the proud,
Take thou content in solitude thy seat;
To noble ends devote thy sacred art,
And nurse for better worlds thine own immortal part!"

VI.

Praise to that Power who from my earliest days,
Thus taught me what to seek and what to shun;
Who turned my footsteps from the crouded ways,
Appointing me my better course to run
In solitude, with studious leisure blest,
The mind unfettered, and the heart at rest.

VII.

For therefore have my days been days of joy,
And all my paths are paths of pleasantness:
And still my heart, as when I was a boy,
Doth never know an ebb of chearfulness;
Time, which matures the intellectual part,
Hath tinged my hairs with grey, but left untouched my heart.

VIII.

Sometimes I soar where Fancy guides the rein,
Beyond this visible diurnal sphere;
But most with long and self-approving pain,
Patient pursue the historian's task severe;
Thus in the ages which are past I live,
And those which are to come my sure reward will give.

IX.

Yea in this now, while Malice frets her hour,
Is foretaste given me of that meed divine;
Here undisturbed in this sequestered bower,
The friendship of the good and wise is mine;
And that green wreath which decks the Bard when dead,
That laureate garland crowns my living head.

X.

That wreath which in Eliza's golden days
My master dear, divinest Spenser wore,
That which rewarded Drayton's learned lays,
Which thoughtful Ben and gentle Daniel bore,
Grin Envy through thy ragged mask of scorn!
In honour it was given, with honour it is worn!

XI.

Proudly I raised the high thanksgiving strain
Of victory in a rightful cause achieved;
For which I long had looked and not in vain,
As one who with firm faith and undeceived,
In history and the heart of man could find
Sure presage of deliverance for mankind.

XII.

Proudly I offered to the royal ear
My song of joy when war's dread work was done,
And glorious Britain round her satiate spear
The olive garland twined by Victory won;
Exulting as became me in such cause,
I offered to the Prince his People's just applause.

XIII.

And when, as if the tales of old Romance
Were but to typify his splendid reign,
Princes and Potentates from conquered France,
And chiefs in arms approved, a peerless train,
Assembled at his Court, .. my duteous lays
Preferred a welcome of enduring praise.

XIV.

And when that last and most momentous hour,
Beheld the re-risen cause of evil yield
To the Red Cross and England's arm of power,
I sung of Waterloo's unequalled field,
Paying the tribute of a soul embued
With deepest joy devout and aweful gratitude.

XV.

Such strains beseemed me well. But how shall I
To hymeneal numbers tune the string,
Who to the trumpet's martial symphony,
And to the mountain gales am wont to sing?
How may these unaccustomed accents suit
To the sweet dulcimer and courtly lute?

XVI.

Fitter for me the lofty strain severe,
That calls for vengeance for mankind oppress;
Fitter the songs that youth may love to hear,
Which warm and elevate the throbbing breast;
Fitter for me with meed of solemn verse,
In reverence to adorn the hero's herse.

XVII.

But then my Master dear arose to mind,
He on whose song while yet I was a boy,
My spirit fed, attracted to its kind,
And still insatiate of the growing joy;..
He on whose tomb these eyes were wont to dwell,
With inward yearnings which I may not tell;

XVIII.

He whose green bays shall bloom for ever young,
And whose dear name whenever I repeat,
Reverence and love are trembling on my tongue;
Sweet Spenser, .. sweetest Bard; yet not more swe
Than pure was he, and not more pure than wise,
High Priest of all the Muses' mysteries.

XIX.

I called to mind that mighty Master's song,
When he brought home his beautifullest bride,
And Mulla murmured her sweet undersong,
And Mole with all his mountain woods replied;
Never to mortal lips a strain was given,
More rich with love, more redolent of Heaven.

XX.

His cup of joy was mantling to the brim,
Yet solemn thoughts enhanced his deep delight;
A holy feeling filled his marriage-hymn,
And Love aspired with Faith a heavenward flight.
And hast not thou, my Soul, a solemn theme?
I said, and mused until I fell into a dream.

The Lay of the Laureate.

THE DREAM.

The Lay of the Laureate.

THE DREAM.

I.

Methought I heard a stir of hasty feet,
And horses tramped and coaches rolled along.
And there were busy voices in the street,
As if a multitude were hurrying on;
A stir it was which only could befall
Upon some great and solemn festival.

II.

Such crowds I saw, and in such glad array,
It seemed some general joy had filled the land;
Age had a sunshine on its cheek that day,
And children, tottering by the mother's hand,
Too young to ask why all this joy should be,
Partook it, and rejoiced for sympathy.

III.

The shops, that no dull care might intervene,
Were closed; the doors within were lined with heads;
Glad faces were at every window seen,
And from the clustered house-tops and the leads,
Others who took their stand in patient row,
Looked down upon the crowds that swarmed below.

IV.

And every one of all that numerous throng
On head or breast a marriage symbol bore;
The war-horse proudly as he paced along
Those joyous colours in his forelock wore,
And arched his stately neck as for delight,
To show his mane thus pompously bedight.

V.

From every church the merry bells rung round
With gladdening harmony heard far and wide;
In many a mingled peal of swelling sound,
The hurrying music came on every side;
And banners from the steeples waved on high,
And streamers fluttered in the sun and sky.

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VI.

Anon the cannon's voice in thunder spake,
Westward it came, the East returned the sound;
Burst after burst the innocuous thunders brake,
And rolled from side to side with quick rebound.
O happy land, where that terrific voice
Speaks but to bid all habitants rejoice!

VII.

Thereat the crowd rushed forward one and all,
And I too in my dream was borne along.
Eftsoon, methought, I reached a festal hall,
Where guards in order ranged repelled the throng,
But I had entrance through that guarded door,
In honour to the laureate crown I wore.

VIII.

That spacious hall was hung with trophies round,
Memorials proud of many a well-won day:
The flag of France there trailed toward the ground;
There in captivity her Eagles lay,
And under each in aye-enduring gold,
One well-known word its fatal story told.

IX.

There read I Nile conspicuous from afar,
And Egypt and Maida there were found;
And Copenhagen there and Trafalgar;
Vimeiro and Busaco's day renowned;
There too was seen Barrosa's bloody name,
And Albuhera, dear-bought field of fame.

X.

Yon spoils from boastful Massena were won;
Those Marmont left in that illustrious fight
By Salamanca, when too soon the sun
Went down, and darkness hid the Frenchman's flight
These from Vittoria's plain the Wellesley bore,
When from the Intruder's head Spain's stolen crown he tore.

XI.

These on Pyrene's aweful heights were gained,
The trophies of that memorable day,
When deep with blood her mountain springs were stained
Above the clouds and lightnings of that fray,
Wheeling afar the affrighted eagles fled;
At eve the wolves came forth and preyed upon the dead.

XII.

And blood stained flags were here from Orthies borne,
Trampled by France beneath her flying feet;
And what before Thoulouse from Soult were torn
When the stern Marshal met his last defeat,
Yielding once more to Britain's arm of might,
And Wellington in mercy spared his flight.

XIII.

There hung the Eagles which with victory flushed,
From Fleurus and from Ligny proudly flew,
To see the Usurper's high-swoln fortune crushed
For ever on the field of Waterloo,
Day of all days, surpassing in its fame
All fields of elder or of later name!

XIV.

There too the painter's universal art,
Each story told to all beholders' eyes;
And Sculpture there had done her fitting part,
Bidding the forms perdurable arise
Of those great Chiefs, who in the field of fight
Had best upheld their country's sacred right.

XV.

There stood our peerless Edward, gentle-souled,
The Sable Prince of chivalry the flower;
And that Plantagenet of sterner mould,
He who the conquered crown of Gallia wore;
And Blake, and Nelson, Glory's favourite son,
And Marlborough there, and Wolfe and Wellington.

XVI.

But from the statues and the storied wall,
The living scene withdrew my wondering sense;
For with accordant pomp that gorgeous hall
Was filled; and I beheld the opulence
Of Britain's Court,.. a proud assemblage there,
Her Statesmen, and her Warriors, and her Fair.

XVII.

Amid that Hall of Victory side by side,
Conspicuous o'er the splendid company,
There sate a royal Bridegroom and his Bride;
In her fair cheek, and in her bright blue eye,
Her flaxen locks and her benignant mien,
The marks of Brunswick's Royal Line were seen.

XVIII.

Of princely lineage and of princely heart,
The Bridegroom seemed,.. a man approved in fight,
Who in the great deliverance bore his part,
And had pursued the recreant Tyrant's flight
When driven from injured Germany he fled,
Bearing the curse of God and Man upon his head.

XIX.

Guerdant before his feet a Lion lay,
The Saxon Lion, terrible of yore,
Who in his withered limbs and lean decay,
The marks of long and cruel bondage bore,
But broken now beside him lay the chain,
Which galled and fretted late his neck and mane.

XX.

A Lion too was couched before the Bride;
That noble Beast had never felt the chain;
Strong were his sinewy limbs and smooth his hide,
And o'er his shoulders broad the affluent mane
Dishevelled hung; beneath his feet were laid
Torn flags of France whereon his bed he made.

XXI.

Full different were those Lions twain in plight,
Yet were they of one brood; and side by side
Of old, the Gallic Tyger in his might
They many a time had met, and quelled his pride,
And made the treacherous spoiler from their ire
Cowering and crippled to his den retire.

XXII.

Two Forms divine on either side the throne,
Its heavenly guardians, male and female stood.
His eye was bold, and on his brow there shone
Contempt of all base things, and pride subdued
To wisdom's will: a warrior's garb he wore,
And HONOUR was the name the Genius bore.

XXIII.

That other form was in a snow-white vest,
As well her virgin loveliness became;
Erect her port, and on her spotless breast
A blood-red cross was hung: FAITH was her name,
As by that sacred emblem might be seen,
And by her eagle eye, and by her dove-like mien.

XXIV.

Her likeness such to that robuster power,
That sure his sister she might have been deemed,
Child of one womb at one auspicious hour.
Akin they were, yet not as thus it seemed,
For he of VALOUR was the eldest son,
From Areté in happy union sprung.

XXV.

But her to Phronis, Eusebeia bore,
She whom her mother Dicé sent to earth;
What marvel, then if thus their features wore
Resemblant lineaments of kindred birth,
Dicé being child of Him who rules above,
VALOUR his earth-born son; so both derived from Jove.

XXVI.

While I stood gazing, suddenly the air
Was filled with solemn music breathing round;
And yet no mortal instruments were there,
Nor seemed that melody an earthly sound,
So wonderously it came, so passing sweet,
For some strange pageant sure a prelude meet.

XXVII.

In every breast methought there seemed to be
A hush of reverence mingled with dismay;
For now appeared a heavenly company
Toward the royal seat who held their way;
A female Form majestic led them on, . .
With aweful port she came, and stood before the Throne.

XXVIII.

Gentle her mien and void of all offence;
But if aught wronged her she could strike such fear,
As when Minerva in her Sire's defence
Shook in Phlegræan fields her dreadful spear.
Yet her benignant aspect told that ne'er
Would she refuse to heed a suppliant's prayer.

XXIX.

The Trident of the Seas in her right hand,
The sceptre which that Bride was born to wield,
She bore, in symbol of her just command,
And in her left displayed the Red-Cross shield.
A plume of milk-white feathers overspread
The laurelled helm which graced her lofty head.

XXX.

Daughter of Brunswick's fated line, she said,
While joyful realms their gratulations pay,
And ask for blessings on thy bridal bed,
We too descend upon this happy day,..
Receive with willing ear what we impart,
And treasure up our counsels in thy heart.!

XXXI.

Long may it be ere thou art called to bear
The weight of empire in a day of woe!
Be it thy favoured lot meantime to share
The joys which from domestic virtue flow,
And may the lessons which are now imprest
In years of leisure, sink into thy breast.

XXXII.

Look to thy Sire, and in his steady way,
As in his Father's he, learn thou to tread;
That thus, when comes the inevitable day,
No other change be felt than of the head
Which wears the crown; thy name will then be blest
Like theirs, when thou too shalt be called to rest.

XXXIII.

Love peace and cherish peace; but use it so
That war may find thee ready at all hours;
And ever when thou strikest, let the blow
Be swift and sure: then put forth all the powers
Which God hath given thee to redress thy wrong,
And, powerful as thou art, the strife will not be long.

XXXIV.

Let not the sacred Trident from thy hand
Depart, nor lay the falchion from thy side!
Queen of the Seas, and mighty on the land,
Thy power shall then be dreaded far and wide:
And, trusting still in God and in the Right,
Thou mayest again defy the World's collected might.

XXXV.

Thus as she ceased a comely Sage came on,
His temples and capacious forehead spread
With locks of venerable eld, which shone
As when in wintry morns on Skiddaw's head
The cloud, the sunshine, and the snow unite,
So silvery, so unsullied, and so white.

XXXVI.

Of Kronos and the Nymph Mnemōsyné
He sprung, on either side a birth divine;
Thus to the Olympian Gods allied was he,
And brother to the sacred Sisters nine,
With whom he dwelt in interchange of lore,
Each thus instructing each for evermore.

XXXVII.

They called him Praxis in the Olympian tongue,
But here on earth EXPERIENCE was his name.
Whatever things have past to him were known,
And he could see the future ere it came;
Such foresight was his patient wisdom's meed,..
Alas for those who his wise counsels will not heed!

XXXVIII.

He bore a goodly volume, which he laid
Between that princely couple on the throne.
Lo there my work for this great realm, he said,
My work, which with the kingdom's growth has grown,
The rights, the usages, the laws wherein
Blessed above all nations she hath been.

XXXIX.

Such as the sacred trust to thee is given,
So unimpaired transmit it to thy line:
Preserve it as the choicest gift of Heaven,
Alway to make the bliss of thee and thine:
The talisman of England's strength is there,
With reverence guard it, and with jealous care!

XL.

The next who stood before that royal pair
Came gliding like a vision o'er the ground;
A glory went before him thro' the air,
Ambrosial odours floated all around,
His purple wings a heavenly lustre shed,
A silvery halo hovered round his head.

XLI.

The Angel of the English Church was this,
With whose divinest presence there appeared
A glorious train, inheritors of bliss,
Saints in the memory of the good revered,
Who having rendered back their vital breath
To Him from whom it came, were perfected by Death.

XLII.

Edward the spotless Tudor, there I knew,
In whose pure breast, with pious nurture fed,
All generous hopes and gentle virtues grew;
A heavenly diadem adorned his head,
Most blessed Prince, whose saintly name might move
The understanding heart to tears of reverent love.

XLIII.

Less radiant than King Edward, Cranmer came,
But purged from persecution's sable spot;
For he had given his body to the flame,
And now in that right hand, which flinching not
He proffered to the fire's atoning doom,
Bore he the unfading palm of martyrdom.

XLIV.

There too came Latimer, in worth allied,
Who to the stake when brought by Romish rage,
As if with prison weeds he cast aside
The infirmity of flesh and weight of age,
Bow-bent till then with weakness, in his shroud
Stood up erect and firm before the admiring crowd.

XLV.

With these, partakers in beatitude,
Bearing like them the palm, their emblem meet,
The Noble Army came, who had subdued
All frailty, putting death beneath their feet:
Their robes were like the mountain snow, and bright
As tho' they had been dipt in the fountain-springs of light.

XLVI.

For these were they who valiantly endured
The fierce extremity of mortal pain,
By no weak tenderness to life allured,
The victims of that hateful Henry's reign,
And of the bloody Queen, beneath whose sway
Rome lit her fires, and Fiends kept holyday.

XLVII.

O pardon me, thrice holy Spirits dear,
That hastily I now must pass ye by!
No want of duteous reverence is there here:
None better knows nor deeplier feels than I.
What to your sufferings and your faith we owe,
Ye valiant champions for the truth below!

XLVIII.

Hereafter haply with maturer care,
(So Heaven permit) that reverence shall be shown.
Now of my vision I must needs declare,
And how the Angel stood before the throne,
And fixing on that Princess as he spake
His eye benign, the aweful silence brake.

XLIX.

Thus said the Angel, Thou to whom one day
There shall in earthly guardianship be given
The English Church, preserve it from decay!
Ere now for that most sacred charge hath Heaven
In perilous times provided female means,
Blessing it beneath the rule of pious Queens.

L.

Bear thou that great Eliza in thy mind,
Who from a wreck this fabric edified;
And HER who to a nation's voice resigned,
When Rome in hope its wiliest engines plied,
By her own heart and righteous Heaven approved,
Stood up against the Father whom she loved.

LI.

Laying all mean regards aside, fill Thou
Her seats with wisdom and with learned worth;
That so whene'er attacked, with fearless brow
Her champions may defend her rights on earth;
Linked is her welfare closely with thine own,
One fate attends the Altar and the Throne!

LII.

Think not that lapse of ages shall abate
The inveterate malice of that Harlot old;
Fallen tho' thou deemest her from her high estate,
She proffers still the envenomed cup of gold,
And her fierce Beast, whose names are Blasphemy,
The same that was, is still, and still must be.

LIII.

The stern Sectarian in unnatural league
Joins her to war against their hated foe;
Error and Faction aid the bold intrigue,
And the dark Atheist seeks her overthrow,
While giant Zeal in arms against her stands,
Barks with an hundred mouths, and lifts an hundred hands.

LIV.

Built on a rock, the fabric may repel
Their utmost rage, if all within be sound:
But if within the gates Indifference dwell,
Woe to her then! there needs no outward wound!
Thro' her whole frame benumbed, a lethal sleep,
Like the cold poison of the asp will creep.

LV.

In thee, as in a cresset set on high,
The light of piety should shine far seen,
A guiding beacon fixed for every eye.
Thus from the influence of an honoured Queen,
As from its spring, should public good proceed,
The peace of Heaven will be thy proper meed.

LVI.

So should return that happy state of yore
When piety and joy went hand in hand;
The love which to his flock the shepherd bore,
The old observances which cheered the land,
The household prayers which, honouring God's high name,
Kept the lamp trimmed and fed the sacred flame.

LVII.

Thus having spoke, away the Angel past
With all his train, dissolving from the sight:
A transitory shadow overcast
The sudden void they left; all meaner light
Seeming like darkness to the eye which lost
The full effulgence of that heavenly host.

LVIII.

Eftsoon, in reappearing light confessed,
There stood another minister of bliss,
With his own radiance clothed as with a vest.
One of the angelic company was this,
Who, guardians of the rising human race,
Alway in Heaven behold the Father's face.

LIX.

Somewhile he fixed upon the royal Bride
A contemplative eye of thoughtful grief;
The trouble of that look benign implied
A sense of wrongs for which he sought relief,
And that Earth's evils which go unredrest
May waken sorrow in an Angel's breast.

LX.

I plead for babes and sucklings, he began,
Those who are now, and who are yet to be;
I plead for all the surest hopes of man,
The vital welfare of humanity:
Oh! let not bestial Ignorance maintain
Longer within the land her brutalizing reign.

LXI.

O Lady, if some new-born babe should bless,
In answer to a nation's prayers, thy love,
When thou beholding it in tenderness,
The deepest, holiest joy of earth shalt prove,
In that the likeness of all infants see,
And call to mind that hour what now thou hearest from me.

LXII.

Then seeing infant man, that Lord of Earth,
Most weak and helpless of all breathing things,
Remember that as Nature makes at birth
No different law for Peasants or for Kings,
And at the end no difference may befall,
The " short parenthesis of life " is all.

LXIII.

But in that space, how wide may be their doom
Of honour or dishonour, good or ill!
From Nature's hand like plastic clay they come,
To take from circumstance their woe or weal;
And as the form and pressure may be given,
They wither upon earth, or ripen there for Heaven.

LXIV.

Is it then fitting that one soul should pine
For lack of culture in this favoured land?..
That spirits of capacity divine
Perish, like seeds upon the desert sand?..
That needful knowledge in this age of light
Should not by birth be every Briton's right?

LXV.

Little can private zeal effect alone;
The State must this state-malady redress!
For as of all the ways of life, but one...
The path of duty, leads to happiness,
So in their duty States must find at length
Their welfare, and their safety, and their strength.

LXVI.

This the first duty, carefully to train
The children in the way that they should go.
Then of the family of guilt and pain
How large a part were banished from below!
How should the people love with surest cause
Their country, and revere her venerable laws!

LXVII.

Is there, alas! within the human soul
An in-bred taint disposing it for ill?
More need that early culture should controul
And discipline by love the pliant will!
The heart of man is rich in all good seeds;
Neglected, it is choaked with tares and noxious weeds.

LXVIII.

He ceased, and sudden from some unseen throng
A choral peal arose and shook the hall;
As when ten thousand children with their song
Fill the resounding temple of Saint Paul;..
Scarce can the heart their powerful tones sustain;..
"Save, or we perish!" was the thrilling strain.

LXIX.

"Save, or we perish!" thrice the strain was sung
By unseen Souls innumerous hovering round,
And whilst the hall with their deep chorus rung,
The inmost heart was shaken with the sound:
I felt the refluent blood forsake my face,
And my knees trembled in that aweful place.

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LXX.

Anon two female forms before our view
Came side by side, a beauteous couplement:
The first a virgin clad in skiey blue;
Upward to Heaven her stedfast eyes were bent;
Her countenance an anxious meaning bore,
Yet such as might have made her loved the more.

LXXI.

This was that maiden, "sober, chaste and wise,"
Who bringeth to all hearts their best delight:
"Tho' spoused, yet wanting wedlock's solemnize;
"Daughter of Cœlia, and Speranza hight,"
I knew her well as one, whose portraiture
In my dear Master's verse for ever will endure.

LXXII.

Her sister too the same divinest page,
Taught me to know for that Charissa fair,
" Of goodly grace and comely personage,
Of wonderous beauty and of bounty rare,
Full of great love," in whose most gentle mien
The charms of perfect womanhood were seen.

LXXIII.

This lovely pair unrolled before the throne
" Earth's melancholy map," whereon to sight
Two broad divisions at a glance were shown, . .
The empires these of Darkness and of Light.
Well might the thoughtful bosom sigh to mark
How wide a portion of the map was dark.

LXXIV.

Behold, Charissa cried, how large a space
Of Earth lies unredeemed! Oh grief to think
That countless myriads of immortal race,
In error born, in ignorance must sink,
Trained up in customs which corrupt the heart,
And following miserably the evil part!

LXXV.

Regard the expanded Orient, from the shores
Of scorched Arabia and the Persian sea,
To where the inhospitable Ocean roars
Against the rocks of frozen Tartary;
Look next at those Australian isles which lie
Thick as the stars that stud the wintry sky;

LXXVI.

Then let thy mind contemplative survey
That spacious region where in elder time
Earth's unremembered conquerors held the sway;
And Science, trusting in her skill sublime,
With lore abstruse the sculptured walls o'erspread,
Its import now forgotten with the dead.

LXXVII.

From Nile and Congo's undiscovered springs
To the four seas which gird the unhappy land,
Behold it left a prey to barbarous Kings,
The Robber, or the Trader's ruthless hand;
Sinning and suffering, every where unblest,
Behold her wretched sons, oppressing and oppress!

LXXVIII.

To England is the Eastern empire given,
And hers the sceptre of the circling main;
Shall she not then diffuse the word of Heaven
Through all the regions of her trusted reign,
Wage against evil things the hallowed strife,
And sow with liberal hand the seeds of life!

LXXIX.

By strenuous efforts in a rightful cause
Gloriously hath she surpassed her ancient fame,
And won in arms the astonished World's applause.
Yet may she win in peace a nobler name,
And Nations which now lie in error blind,
Hail her the Friend and Teacher of Mankind!

LXXX.

Oh! what a part were that, Speranza then
Exclaimed, to act upon Earth's ample stage!
Oh! what a name among the sons of men
To leave, which should endure from age to age!
And what a strength that ministry of good
Should find in love and human gratitude!

LXXXI.

Speed thou the work, Redeemer of the World!
That the long miseries of mankind may cease!
Where'er the Red Cross banner is unfurled
There let it carry truth, and light, and peace!
Did not the Angels who announced thy birth
Proclaim it with the sound of Peace on Earth?

LXXXII.

Bless thou this happy Island, that the stream
Of blessing far and wide from hence may flow!
Bless it that so thy saving Mercy's beam
Reflected hence may shine on all below!
THY KINGDOM COME! THY WILL BE DONE, O LORD!
AND BE THY HOLY NAME THRO' ALL THE WORLD ADORED!

LXXXIII.

Thus as Speranza cried she clasped her hands,
And heavenward lifted them in ardent prayer.
Lo! at the act the vaulted roof expands,..
Heaven opens,.. and in empyreal air
Pouring its splendours thro' the inferior sky,
More bright than noon-day suns the CROSS appears on
high.

LXXXIV.

A strain of heavenly harmony ensued,
Such as but once to mortal ears was known,..
The voice of that Angelic Multitude
Who in their Orders stand around the Throne;
PEACE UPON EARTH, GOOD WILL TO MEN! they sung,
And Heaven and Earth with that prophetic anthem rung.

LXXXV.

In holy fear I fell upon the ground,
And hid my face, unable to endure
The glory, or sustain the piercing sound:
In fear and yet in trembling joy, for sure
My soul that hour yearned strongly to be free,
That it might spread its wings in immortality.

LXXXVI.

Gone was the glory when I raised my head,
But in the air appeared a form half-seen,
Below with shadows dimly garmented,
And indistinct and dreadful was his mien:
Yet when I gazed intentlier, I could trace
Divinest beauty in that awful face.

LXXXVII.

Hear me, O Princess! said the shadowy form,
As in administering this mighty land
Thou with thy best endeavour shalt perform
The will of Heaven, so shall my faithful hand
Thy great and endless recompence supply;..
My name is DEATH: THE LAST BEST FRIEND AM I!

The Lay of the Laureate.

EPILOGUE.

The Lay of the Laureate.

EPILOGUE.

I.

Is this the Nuptial Song? with brow severe
Perchance the votaries of the world will say:
Are these fit strains for Royal ears to hear?
What man is he who thus assorts his lay,
And dares pronounce with inauspicious breath,
In Hymeneal verse, the name of Death!

II.

Remote from chearful intercourse of men,
Hath he indulged his melancholy mood,
And like the hermit in some sullen den,
Fed his distempered mind in solitude?
Or have fanatic dreams distraught his sense,
That thus he should presume with bold irreverence?

III.

O Royal Lady, ill they judge the heart
That reverently approaches thee to-day,
And anxious to perform its fitting part,
Prefers the tribute of this duteous lay!
Not with displeasure should his song be read
Who prays for Heaven's best blessings on thy head.

V.

He prays that many a year may pass away
Ere the State call thee from a life of love;
Vexed by no public cares, that day by day
Thy heart the dear domestic joys may prove,
And gracious Heaven thy chosen nuptials bless.
With all a Wife's and all a Mother's happiness.

V.

He prays, that for thine own and England's sake;
The Virtues and the Household Charities
Their favoured seat beside thy hearth may take;
That when the Nation thither turn their eyes,
There the conspicuous model they may find
Of all which makes the bliss of human-kind.

VI.

He prays, that when the sceptre to thy hand
In due succession shall descend at length,
Prosperity and Peace may bless the Land,
Truth be thy counsellor, and Heaven thy strength;
That every tongue thy praises may proclaim,
And every heart in secret bless thy name.

VII.

He prays, that thou mayest strenuously maintain
The wise laws handed down from sire to son:
He prays, that under thy auspicious reign
All may be added which is left undone,
To make the realm, its polity compleat,
In all things happy as in all things great:

VIII.

That through the will of thy enlightened mind,
Brute man may be to social life reclaimed;
That in compassion for forlorn mankind,
The saving Faith may widely be proclaimed
Thro' erring lands, beneath thy fostering care;..
This is his ardent hope, his loyal prayer.

IX.

In every cottage may thy power be blest,
For blessings which should every-where abound;
Thy will beneficent from East to West
May bring forth good where'er the sun goes round;
And thus thro' future times should CHARLOTTE's fame
Surpass our great ELIZA's golden name.

X.

Of aweful subjects have I dared to sing,
Yet surely are they such, as viewed aright,
Contentment to thy better mind may bring:
A strain which haply may thy heart invite
To ponder well, how to thy choice is given
A glorious name on Earth, a high reward in Heaven.

XI.

Light strains, tho' chearful as the hues of spring,
Would wither like a wreath of vernal flowers;
The amaranthine garland which I bring
Shall keep its verdure thro' all after hours;..
Yea, while the Poet's name is doomed to live,
So long this garland shall its fragrance give.

XII.

"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown";
Thus said the Bard who spake of kingly cares:
But calmly may the Sovereign then lie down
When grateful Nations guard him with their prayers:
How sweet a sleep awaits the Royal head,
When these keep watch and ward around the bed!

L'ENVOY.

Go, little Book, from this my solitude, . .
I cast thee on the waters: . . go thy ways!
And if, as I believe, thy vein be good,
The world will find thee after many days.
Be it with thee according to thy worth: . .
Go, little Book! in faith I send thee forth.

FINIS.

NOTES.

NOTES.

The short parenthesis of life is all. P. 48.

I have borrowed this striking expression from Storer.

All as my chrysom, so my winding sheet;
None joy'd my birth, none mourn'd my death to see;
The short parenthesis of life was sweet,
But short;.. what was before, unknown to me,
And what must follow is the Lord's decree.

STORER'S *Life and Death of Wolsey.*

Let me insert here a beautiful passage from this forgotten poet, whose work has been retrieved from oblivion in the Heliconia. Wolsey is speaking.

More fit the dirige of a mournful quire
In dull sad notes all sorrows to exceed,
For him in whom the Prince's love is dead.

I am the tomb where that affection lies,
That was the closet where it living kept:
Yet wise men say affection never dies;..
No, but it turns, and when it long hath slept,
Looks heavy, like the eye that long hath wept.'
O could it die,.. that were a restful state!
But living, it converts to deadly hate.

Daughter of Cælia and Speranza hight. P. 52.

IV.

Dame Cœlia men did her call as thought
From Heaven to come, or thither to arise,
The mother of three daughters well up-brought
In goodly thews or godly exercise:
The eldest two, most sober chaste and wise,
Fidelia and Speranza virgins were,
Tho' spoused yet wanting wedlock's solemnize;
But fair Charissa to a lovely fere
Was linked, and by him had many pledges dear.

Faery Queen, Book 1, *c.* 10.

I knew her well, as one whose portraiture
In my dear Master's verse for ever shall endure. P. 52.

XII.

Thus as they gan of sundry things devise,
Lo two most goodly virgins came in place,
Ylinked arm in arm in lovely wise,
With countenance demure, and modest grace,
They numbred equal steps and even pace:
Of which the eldest, that Fidelia hight,
Like sunny beams threw from her chrystal face,
That could have dazed the rash beholder's sight,
And round about her head did shine like Heaven's light.

XIII.

She was arrayed all in lilly white,
And in her right hand bore a cup of gold,
With wine and water filled up to the height,
In which a serpent did himself enfold,
That horror made to all that did behold;
But she no whit did change her constant mood;
And in her other hand she fast did hold
A book, that was both signed and sealed with blood,
Wherein dark things were writ, hard to be understood.

XIV.

Her younger sister, that Speranza hight,
Was clad in blue that her beseemed well;
Not all so chearful seemed she of sight
As was her sister; whether dread did dwell,
Or anguish in her heart, is hard to tell.
Upon her arm a silver anchor lay,
Whereon she leaned ever, as befell:
And ever up to Heaven as she did pray,
Her stedfast eyes were bent, no swarved other way.

Faery Queen, Book 1, *Canto* 10.

Her sister too the same divinest page
Taught me to know. P. 53.

XXX.

She was a woman in her freshest age,
Of wondrous beauty, and of bounty rare,
With goodly grace and comely personage.
That was on earth not easy to compare,
Full of great love.

Faery Queen, B. 1, *C.* 10.

Earth's melancholy map. P. 53.

A part how small of the terraqueous globe
Is tenanted by man! the rest a waste;
Rocks, deserts, frozen seas, and burning sands,
Wild haunts of monsters, poisons, stings and death!
Such is Earth's melancholy map! but far
More sad! this earth is a true map of man.

YOUNG, *Night* 1, *l.* 285.

It is the moral rather than the physical map which ought to excite this mournful feeling, .. but such contemplations ought to excite our hope and our zeal also, for how large a part of all existing evil, physical as well as moral, is remediable by human means!

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